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ARMY CORRESPONDENCE OF COL.
JOHN LAURENS.

[In 1867 the Bradford Club, of New York, published a volume of "the army correspondence of Colonel John Laurens in the years 1777-8," which was edited, with a memoir of Col. Laurens, by Wm. Gilmore Simms. The letters here given do not appear in that volume. They are from originals in possession of the South Carolina Historical Society. Col. Laurens was at school in England when the Revolution began, but returned to Charles Town in April 1777, and soon went to the North, and was taken into Gen. Washington's official family as an aide-de-camp with the rank of lieutenant-colonel. These letters cover various periods in his military career from that time until his death, August 27, 1782.]

[1.]

[WILLIAM MANNING TO JOHN LAURENS.]

Addressed: John Laurens Esq^r
Charles Town
S^o Carolina

John Laurens Esq^r
Dear Sir

London 12 July 1777
(1st Copy)

I have received your several favours of the 11th, 25th, & 27th Jany., 2nd, & 16th April, the letters they covered were delivered as directed, the last gave me most pleasure; I rejoice to hear of your safe arrival at Charles Town, & of your escape from the several perils my imagination had formed for you, I confess I expected to hear of you from some English port, concluding that you would be inter-

cepted by a Man of War; now my fears create new dangers for you, least your zeal shou'd hurry you too forward in the Military line, my only hopes are your being governed by your Fathers prudence, & Moderation.—As you take no notice of my letters of the 17th January, & 4th Febry, in answer to your two 1st I conclude they reached Bordeaux after you had embarked, Patty wrote at the same times, & oftener than I did; the 1st was to inform you of your having a Daughter, who has undergone much pain, & misery by a swelling in her Hip, & Thigh, I believe from a hurt by the carelessness of the Nurse, which she would not confess, for a long time, I did not expect she could live, & from Doc^r Hills opinion I thought it impossible, but M^r Grindalls skill saved her, & she is now very well at Chelsea, for the change of air. From you desiring me to procure a passage for Patty, she is all impatience to sett out, I said little to stem these first emotions, but I have since talked to her on the risk she must run, & the hardships she must be exposed to, they seem to stagger her, though they have not yet (over) altered her resolutions, but if she will be guided by me, I would by no means have her venture till peace is restored to us, & even then I should not think it prudent to venture, without you come for her, I believe I could put her into very safe hands to convey her to S^t Kitts about Xmas next, but shou'd the Ship be taken by an American Privateer, she may be exposed to horrid insults, & in her passage from S^t Eustatia to Charles Town, as much is to be dreaded from English Ships of War, I can't object to her joining you, if it can be done with safety, but I shall be very unhappy to part with her under our present disagreeable circumstances,¹ altho' M^r Daniel Blake² has

¹ Mrs. Laurens probably took her father's advice and remained in England, and the following notice probably shows when Col. Laurens's only child first came to Charleston:

"Wednesday last Mrs. Laurens, (widow of the late James Laurens, Esq;) Miss Patty Laurens and Miss Polly Laurens, (daughters of the Hon. Henry Laurens, Esq;) Miss Fanny Laurens, (only child of the brave Col. John Laurens, deceased)" and others "arrived here from London, in the ship Olive Branch, Capt. Angus."—*The South-Carolina Gazette and Public Advertiser*, Saturday, May 14, 1785.

² See April 1900 magazine, pp. 159-60.

very politely assured me of his protection to her; you will conclude from this, that if she follows my advice she will remain here, if not my letter to your Father of the 1st of Jan^y (of which you was bearer) expresses fully what I can at present do for her, I shall therefore only add that my fortune increases as fast as I have any right to expect, & in proportion will be her share, unless I shou'd live to be able to give each of my Daughters £10,000, which I flatter myself 7 or 8 years will effect, & further (at present) I don't think of going, be it more or less, it will be yours by my Will, on your making an adequate settlement, if not it is conveyed to Trustees for her provision, I have as I mentioned to you, continued her on the same stipend with my other Daughters & from a Legacy of £300 bequeathed to her, by her Uncle Mr Ryan, which I hope will last untill a happy accommodation is brought about, & supply the expences of herself, & Child; I shall not use the licence you gave me of breaking into your Father's stock. Mr^s Manning is as usual unwell, Sally in the Country, Patty at Chelsea, Betsey, Jack, & myself keep house, & all join in our affectionate Compliments to you, & our best wishes attend all your undertakings, especially those that tend to peace—

Harry³ spent the Days of Whitsuntide with us, & the nights with Mr Parsons; the Nursery, & Mr^s Manning's illness filled (by sending me to another bed) our house, he is a fine fellow, Mr George Taylor was so pleased with him he gave him half a Guinea; I am going to Richmond presently,

I am

Dear Sir

Original p ^r Family	}	Yours affectionately
Trader (Via Bermuda)		
		W ^m Manning

³ Henry Laurens, Col. Laurens's younger brother, then at school in England.

July 15th 1777

Dear Sir

I went to Richmond & saw Harry well. Patty's letter came under a cover to Jack while we were absent. on my return I sent it to Portsmouth to go by the Family Trader to Mr W^m Savage at Bermuda & I hope it will reach you

I am

Yours affectionately

W^m Manning

Endorsed: W^m Manning

London 12th July 1777—

Answ^d 9th Feby. 1778.

[2.]

[GEN. GEORGE WASHINGTON TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL
JOHN LAURENS.]

Addressed: On public Service

To

Lieut Col^o John Laurens

at

Providence

Rhode Island.

G^o Washington

Endorsed on cover by Alexander Hamilton: To be forwarded
with all speed—

Alex Hamilton

Aide De Camp

Head Quarters White plains 12th Aug^t
1778. 9 oClock P. M.

Dear Sir

The inclosed letter, for Count D'Estaing, is to be delivered to him, provided the British Fleet should not have been arrived, or being arrived, he should not have come to

an engagement with them : For, if the Count should have come to an engagement with the British Admiral before this reaches you, the intelligence, which the letter⁴ contains, will be useless to him, and therefore need not be communicated.

I am Dear Sir

Your most obt^l Serv^t

G^o Washington

Lieut Col^o Laurens.

Endorsed by Henry Laurens: Gen. Washington—

White plains 12th Aug^t 1778

[*To be continued in the next number of this Magazine.*]

⁴ The following is a copy of the inclosure, in John Laurens's handwriting:

Extract of a Letter from Elizabeth Town dated the 10th of August 1778 from Brigadier General Maxwell.

"There is no doubt of the Fleet's being gone, as I mentioned before. Captain Randal from Chatham, came up from the Shore yesterday and confirms the same; Col^o Beatty also returned from Staten Island and brought with him the inclosed list of their Fleet which was gone; but as it was their account (the Enemy's) he does not believe it to be so strong. Nobody allows there are above Two men of War lately come from England, and most say there is but one."

Endorsed by John Laurens: Extract of a Letter
from
Gen^l Maxwell

Added by Henry Laurens: Elizabeth town 10th Aug^t 1778